

Deputy Executive

27 May 1949

Acting Management Officer

Use of McBee Keysort Cards in Biographic Register, Office of
Collection and Dissemination.

1. In November 1948, at the request of the Executive Assistant Director for Collection and Dissemination and Acting Chief, Biographic Register, OCD, [] evaluated a proposed procedure by which the dossier files of Biographic Register would be changed from IBM punched cards to dossier folders. [] informally reported that:

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a. Use of folders would subsequently create a filing space problem.

b. The deficiencies of the IBM cards system could be remedied by procedural changes and by establishing a supplemental folder system for those few cases which involved a great deal of information.

2. The Management Office recommendation was rejected and a folder system was installed. Within six months the deficiency of this system which was anticipated by Management Office became a major problem.

3. The Biographic Register then proposed a 5x8 card system on McBee Keysort cards. The purpose for using McBee cards was to permit quicker sorting of cards to be returned to the file. The McBee system would in no way facilitate the removal of the cards from the file or the actual placing of the card in the file. The original system of IBM punched cards permitted mechanical removal, sorting and refiling of the cards. That system was also designed to permit utilization of facsimile equipment which is on order for OCD.

4. McBee Keysort cards have proven unsatisfactory in many installations. The Management Office has consistently discouraged this utilization in CIA. The limited use of the sorting feature of McBee cards in the Biographic Register operation does not appear to justify the cost, (not only in cost of the equipment, but in man hours expended to effect the system).

5. The attached memorandum of OCD states that an experiment with the McBee cards has proved that those cards are very satisfactory. Yet no statistics as to operational gain are included. Should the Management Office accept this categorical statement?

6. No indication is given as to whether the McBee cards will be prepared separately or in conjunction with the code sheet. The Management Office would like to know if the McBee card heading corresponds with the code sheet to permit simultaneous transcriptions of this information.

7. In view of recent complaints of Chief, Biographic Register, should the Management Office give carte blanche approval or should it seek answers to the questions set forth above?

8. If you feel Management Office should approve the use of the McBee cards, OCD should utilize discarded equipment now in OSI before purchasing new equipment. 25X1A9a

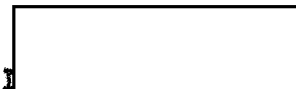


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Management Officer:

1. Approve McBee system.
2. File a copy of above memo, and my action with OCD in case of future difficulties resulting from unwillingness to utilize Management assistance and to accept Management recommendations for improving Biographic Register operations.

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